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J. Wolfe

E S S A Y

UPON

O E C O N O M Y.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

B Y

EDWARD WATKINSON, M. D.

Rector of LITTLE CHART in KENT.

"He ruleth well his own House." 1 TIM. 3.



D U B L I N:

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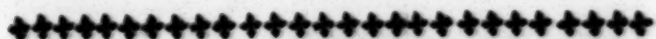
Luke 14.
28.

O R D E R,

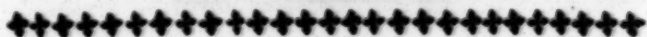
John 20.
7.

P R U D E N C E.

John 6.
12.



*"Gather up the Fragments that remain,
that nothing be lost."*



 **T** H E *Subject* of the following Essay must be universally allowed to be *important*, however *imperfectly* handled. *Oeconomy* is a *comprehensive* Word. It includes all that *provident Care*, *exact Uniformity*, and *prudent Conduct*, so absolutely requisite in human Life. Let it not therefore be considered as something that relates only to *one*, and concerns not *another*; for it is what the *meanest* Station necessarily calls for, the most *Exalted* cannot dispense with.

Exod. 18. *Oeconomy* is equally required in the *Cabinet* and in the *Field*; in *public*, in *private* Life; in the Support of *Government* itself*.

Oeconomy is not suited only to *particular* Times, *Circumstances* and *Occasions*: It is *absolutely* requisite in *all* Situations; it is highly necessary to the sustaining *every* Character, to the Support of *every* Society, to the Interest of every *Individual* of the Community; the Affairs of the *State*, as well as the Concerns of the *Closet*. It is a *moral*, it is a *Christian* Virtue.

Oeconomy implies that *Uniformity*, *Propriety* and *Consistency* of Conduct, which is seen thro' *every* Action—A Decorum in the Seasons of Relaxation, and in *every* Enjoyment—That Temper of Mind which is disposed to retrench *every* unnecessary Expence; and to improve *every* Acquisition to the Glory of the Giver, to

* Here a great *Example* presents itself to you, of *One* of the most *illustrious* Personages in the *Kingdom*.—In his Way of Living, *temperate* and *regular*; inviolably preserving that *Propriety* of Character, which in *Kings*, who lead the *Taste* of the World, is a *distinguished* Virtue; and so *methodical* in every Branch of *Oeconomy*, that his *Attention* descends to *every* Object. In such an Age of *Diffipation* and *Extravagance*, what may not we *hope* from the happy Influence of *such* an Example?—From the Pattern of *One*, who, conscious of being the *First* in *Power*, is emulous of being the *First* in *Virtue*?

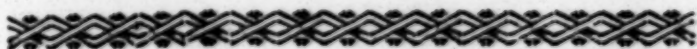
Ecclef. 10.
17.

“Blessed art thou, O Land! when, &c.”

your

your own Happiness, and that of your Fellow-Creatures.

Since then the *Subject* is so *important* in every Point of View, and *all* Persons are so deeply *interested* in it, it may not be an *useless* Task, (perhaps not an *unseasonable* one at this *Juncture*, when the dissolute *Maxims* of Luxury and Pleasure seem to be the *peculiar* and leading *Principle* of the *Times*) to enquire into the respective *Qualifications* requisite to form this GREAT CHARACTER.



F O R E C A S T.

IF we look abroad into the World, and take a Survey of human Conduct in general, we shall find that a great many are reduced to Want thro' their own *Thoughtlessness*, *Irregularity* and *Impudence*. Hence it is, that we hear these "*Complainings* in our Streets;" so that we may well take up the Words of the wise Man, and say Psal. 144. "*The Foolishness of Man* perverteth his Way, "*and his Heart fretteth against the LORD.*" Prov. 19.

Instead of tracing Effects from their *proper* Causes, and taking the Blame on *themselves*, as they *ought*, they are too apt to repine, murmur, and "*charge GOD foolishly.*" Job 1.

A *provident* Care for your *future* Welfare hath ever been esteemed one of the first and most distinguishing Marks of human *Wisdom*.

Joseph shewed his Sagacity in nothing more than in the discreet Advice which he gave to *Pharaoh*, to lay up in the seven *plenteous* Years for the seven ensuing ones of *Famine*; and it was this *Oeconomical* Counsel that so immediately struck the King—"Where shall we find such a one as this? A Man in whom is the Spirit of GOD?"

Gen. 41.

The Ant, (that seemingly *insignificant* Insect) is recommended to your Consideration, both by the sacred and profane Writers*, as a Pattern worthy of your Imitation for its *provident Forecast*.

Prov. 6.

30.

The *discreet* Person is described by *Solomon*, as "*foreseeing* the Evil," and then using proper Means for the *Avoidance* of it.

22.

Forecast is one distinguishing Characteristic of the wise Woman.—"She looketh well unto the Ways of her Household: She eateth not the Bread of Idleness; and previous to her buying a Piece of Ground—she considered."

Prov. 31.

The original Word is remarkably *expressive*.—She revolved it well in her Mind; "in the Deep of her Heart." She gave herself Time to re-

Psal. 64.

* "*Parvula (nam exemplo est) magni formica laboris*
 —"*Haud ignara & non incauta futuri.*" Hor.

reflect, and to *deliberate* upon it, before she *put it in Execution*.

This was *her* Conduct, and that it may have its due Weight with People of all Ranks, (not excepting even the *highest Personages*) let it be remembered, that it was the *Conduct* of no less a Woman than the *Mother of King Lemuel*.

It was this *provident Forecast* in the Steward, which attracted the Admiration of his Lord; (for *so*, and in *this Sense only*, must these Words be understood—"And the Lord *commended* the "unjust Steward." For what? for his being *pro-* Luke 16.
vident) the sagacious *Discernment* which he shewed for his future Support, had he used justifiable *Means*, was doubtless *laudable*.

The Events of this Life are fluctuating and precarious; ought not then some Provision to be made for *unforeseen Losses*? Ought you not to extend your Views farther than the Supply of your *present Wants*? Ought not you to lay up something for *Futurity*?

To look no farther than the *present Moment*; to live at random, secure, and careless of any *future Exigencies*; to concern yourselves about nothing but what is immediately *before* you; and in the Enjoyment of *To-day*, to take no manner of Thought for the *Morrow*, must inevitably be productive of the most fatal Consequences, not only to *yourselves*, but also to *Posterity*. It entails Misery upon "Children that
"are yet *unborn*!" Psal. 78.

In what lively Colours doth the wise Man paint this *too common* Error!—"He begetteth a
Ecclef. 5. "Son, and lo! there is *nothing* in his Hand!"

And St. Paul himself avers, that "he hath
"sunk even below Infidelity, who is negligent
1 Tim. 5. "to provide for those of his own House."

When you guard against an *anxious Solitude*
—*Ægritudo animi*—*Maquise*; (an Imputation
very ill becoming a Christian) to *look forward*
to the Consequences, to the Issue and Event of
Things (as far as you are able) is such a Con-
duct as *Reason* must naturally suggest, *Scripture*
warrants, and *Religion* itself enjoins; such as a
wise Man must approve of, and such as a *good*
one cannot condemn.

"Reason bids you for *your own* provide."

POPE.

Such a Share of Bliss and Happiness as this
World *admits* of, undoubtedly Man may seek
after; but *find* it he will not, enjoy it he can-
not, without serious *Thoughts* and due *Reflection*.
This the united Voice of Reason and Scripture
calls for. *This* the Rotation and Vicissitude of
all human Affairs requires; not only when you
Ezek. 20. "pass under the Rod," for then it is Compul-
sion, it is Necessity drives you to it; but also
"in the Day of Prosperity," when Levity of
Mind and Dissipation of Thought is apt to be
too predominant: For that Laughter must cer-
tainly

tainly be mad, and that Mirth frantic, which is not restrained by *Thought*, and tempered with *Reflection*. Is not *this* the most natural Use of that noble Faculty, by which you are distinguished from every other Part of the Creation? It is by *this* you are enabled to determine what is best for you to do, and to *weigh* the *Consequence* before you *form* a *Resolution*. Eccles. 2.

A discreet and provident *Forecast* is absolutely *necessary* in human Conduct, to enable you to steer your Course through Life with Ease and Satisfaction; not only requisite to your *temporal Interest*, but in itself an indispensable *Duty*, consonant to the first Principle implanted in human Nature: And we may very easily be brought to conceive in *what* State that Person's Affairs must of consequence be, who never allows any Time to *reflect* and *consider*.

Both sacred and profane History furnishes you with Examples of this Kind.

What stronger Instance of *Improvvidence* can you have than in those five Virgins, who took no Oil in their Vessels to supply their Lamps? (For Matt. 25. to what Purpose *had* they their Vessels, if they made no Use of them?) Surely,

“ Si mens non *læva* fuisset,”

(For it is under *that* Denomination [*Masai*] our LORD bids us to consider them) they would not have neglected this *necessary* Precaution.

An

An equal Instance of *Improvvidence* is set before you in that Person who “raised up his Friend at
 “Midnight to borrow three Loaves, having a
 Luke 11. “Guest come, and *nothing* to set before him.”

In profane History, *Steele*, *Fielding* and *Gay*, are *striking* Instances. All of them being once affluent; sustained with Corn, and Wine, and Oil; and (as *Job* expresses it) “washing their
 Job 29. “Steps in Butter.” But (by adopting *Horace’s* Maxim)

“*Dona præsentis rape lætus horæ;*
 “*Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quærere.*”

Thinking no other than that “T’o-morrow
 “should be as this Day, and much more abundant.” They so *embarrassed* their Circumstances, that they were *ever* in Straits and Difficulties; *ever* struggling with Want, *ever* under the Pressure of Necessity.

Were the Enjoyments of the Voluptuary the Foundation of true and solid *Happiness*; (for *this* is the Object in View, though they miss their *Aim*) there might be some *Pretence* at least for such an *eager* Pursuit of them. But in Truth, the Case is much *otherwise*: *Felicity* doth *not* make her Abode with the *Sensualist*, *neither* does she dwell in the *House of Feasting*.—The Voluptuary is *not* the most happy Person in the World.—For *Happiness* is a *secret* Thing;—it depends upon *bidden* Causes;—it is founded upon

upon the *Government of yourselves*;—it cannot be *acquired*, nor is so valuable a *Purchase to be made*, but by Thought, Reflection, and the Command of your Passions*.

There is an *Oeconomy* that must always be observed, in every Pursuit, Action, or Undertaking. Even your *Pleasures*, except used with *Moderation*, prudently varied and pursued rather as a temporary *Relaxation*, than as a constant *Employment*, soon become *insipid*. The most innocent Enjoyments have their Bounds. It is a *temperate Use* that constitutes the *Bliss*, and preserves those Powers and Faculties, on the proper *Exertion* of which the *Happiness* of this Life entirely depends. Health and Competence are the Product of *Temperance*; but when once you pass the Bounds of *Moderation*, and

* Yet this is that Generation, who (notwithstanding all our Remonstrances) are wiser in their own Eyes than “Seven Men that can render a Reason.” Prov. 26. They are *born* for Pleasure. They consider it as the *chief End* of Man; and look upon themselves as sent into this World, like “the Leviathan,” for “*Pastime and Recreation*.” The Mind is lost in a total *Dissipation of Thought*; and “when they come to *themselves*,” find nothing to support or rest upon. So *eager* in their Pursuits, that their “driving is like the driving of Jchu the Son of Nimshi. They *with-hold* their Heart from no Joy.”—But mark well, O ye Sons of Pleasure! the Denunciation of God, by the Mouth of his Prophet: “This shall ye have of mine Hand; ye shall lie down in Sorrow.” Isaiah 50.

fall into the *Dissipations* of Pleasure, the Taste becomes *vitiating*, the Senses are *impaired*, and the proper Relish of every Enjoyment is *totally lost*.

Moderation is necessary at all Seasons, but never *more* required than when the Mind is *elated with Success*.—Then is the *critical Time*, and then it is highly requisite to keep a strict Guard over the Passions, lest they get the Ascendancy over the Reason. The Example of the *Israelites* is a sufficient Admonition to you in the Sacred History, as that of the *Romans* is in the *Profane*.

Deut. 8. With Regard to the *former*, it was not without Reason that the Great Lawgiver admonished them to “*take heed and beware*,” when they were in the Zenith of their Glory: He knew *then* was the proper Season to inculcate the great Duty of serious Thought, Consideration and *Reflection*. As to the *latter*, it is very evident the *Romans* lost Ground by every Victory they gained after the *Carthaginian War*. The Reason is obvious. With the Provinces they added to their Empire, they brought in *new Species of Luxury*; *Dissoluteness* of Manners, and a *mad Emulation* of all Kinds of *Profusion* and *Expence* ran through the Empire, and there was no Check on the *Ambition* of the People. Certain it is, that unless *Moderation* attend *Success*, except *Victory* be improved by *Oeconomy*, the Advantage
of

of every Acquisition is *lost*, and Conquest itself becomes *fruitless*.

No Enterprize, at least *no expensive* Scheme whatsoever, ought to be undertaken without first revolving it in your Mind, without weighing your *Abilities* previous to the *Execution*, without "sitting down first to compute the Cost." Luke 14.

But to form the Character of the *Oeconomist* more complete, I must add to FORECAST,



O R D E R.

OBERVE the *DIVINE* OECONOMY, Ranging and adjusting *every* Thing in such a Manner, that there is not a *Particle* of Matter but what hath its proper Place in Subserviency to the *Whole* of the Creation.

"ORDER is Heav'n's first Law." POPE.

"A beautiful Allusion, (says his ingenious and learned Annotator) to the Scripture-History of the Creation, when GOD first *appeased* the Disorders of Chaos, and separated the Light from Darkness." Gen. 1.

View the whole Frame of the World, (the wonderful Work of Him who is perfect in Knowledge.) Job 37. 16.

ledge.) Reflect on the great Laws of Nature, by which it is preserved in Order and Beauty !

Every Part of the Creation concurs to prove that GOD is, (as the Apostle speaks) *not* the Author of *Confusion*, but of *Order*.
1 Cor. 14.

Look unto the Heavens, and see *all* the celestial Bodies are *constant* in their Courses ! They speak in the common Voice of Reason, and want *no* Interpreter to explain their Meaning. They are a *perpetual*, though a *tacit* Admonition to the World every Day and Night ; and by their *regular* and *constant* Vicissitude, (as the late Bishop of London expresses it) set forth the Excellency of that Wisdom and *Order*, by which they were constituted.
Job 35.

“ The Sun hath his *stated* Time of going down.”
Psal. 104.

“ The Moon is appointed for *certain* Seasons.”

“ The Stars in their *Courses* govern the Night.”
136.

“ The Sea keeps its old Channel ;” and in its utmost Fury *remembers* the first Law of its Maker—“ Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther.”

In every *other* Part the Powers of Nature are duly and *regularly* exerted ! Even the *inanimate* Things of the World have their Office !

Every Work of the Creation hath its *proper* Business, and is designed by the first Cause of all Things to serve *some* wise End.

“ The

“ The *Angels* are his ministering Spirits.
 “ They attend upon and execute his Com-
 “ mands.”

Plal. 103.

Carry your Reflections a little farther, and you will perceive the *Oeconomy* of the Divine Providence with respect to *Miracles* is equally conspicuous.

GOD never inverts the *Order* of Things, except when all human Resources fail, and call for the Exertion of supernatural Powers. Of this you have strong Proofs both in the *Mosaic* and *Evangelical* Dispensations.

Reflect on the admirable Contexture of the human Frame: “ The whole Body fitly joined
 “ together and compacted by that which every
 “ Joint supplieth; so that *each* Member hath
 “ that Office to which it ispeculiarly adapted,
 “ performs its *Function*, and is subservient to a
 “ proper End.”

Ephes. 4.

The Supreme Being, who thus doth every Thing in *Regularity* and *Method*, will certainly take most Delight in those Servants who love (like *Himself*) “ Decency and Order.”

1 Cor. 14.

OBSERVE the CONDUCT of *CHRIST*,
 The IMAGE of *GOD*:

Hebr. 1.

A perfect Pattern to you, since his Life was one continued Scene of *Order*, *Method*, and *Regularity*; and in *this*, as in every Thing *else*, “ he
 “ left

1 Pet. 2. "left you an Example, that you should follow
"his Steps."

Mark 6. When he fed the Five Thousand, he did *not* feed them, as the *Latin* speaks, (*Conglomeratim*) for then how *confused* must the Distribution have been! how *irregularly* served! No. He ordered them to *sit down* on the Grass. He disposed them by *Fifties* in a Company. He distributed the Bread *through the Hands of his Disciples*.

John 20. Even in that light and trivial Circumstance of the *Napkin*, if any Thing may be said to deserve that Appellation, in which the LORD of Glory had a Share, you may trace the Footsteps of that *Order, Regularity and Method*, which extends itself to *every Point* of his Conduct, and is thus *conspicuous* in the most *minute Occurrences* of his Life.

The *Napkin* about his Hand, when he rose from the Grave, was not *carelessly* thrown off; nor *loosely* cast aside; nor put to the *other Linen*. No. He *wrapped* it up. He laid it in a Place
Luke 24. *by itself*.

"All Scripture is written for our Learning." And doubtless *this Circumstance* was recorded with a View to your Instruction.

Certainly, if the Evangelists had entered *more minutely* into the Conduct of CHRIST; if they had indulged us with *other Particulars* of his Behaviour; (for surely the *smallest Occurrences* that could have been mentioned would have had a *Dignity* attending them, that might have in-
terested

terested the most *insensible* Heart !) we should have found *many* *Occasions* to admire that *Beauty* of John 21. *Order*, that *Regularity* of *Method*, and *Propriety* of *Conduct*, which *distinguished* him both in his *public* and *private* Character.

OBSERVE the ORDER of *NATURE*,
Thus beautifully displayed by the Royal Psalmist.

“ In the Darknefs of the *Night* all the *Beasts*
“ of the *Forest* do move.” Psal. 104.

“ When the *Sun* *arifeth*, the *Lions*, who
“ were before roaring after their *Prey*, get them
“ away together, and lay them down in their
“ *Dens*.”

“ The *Locusts* (fays the *Wife Man*) have *no*
“ *King*, yet go they forth all of them by
“ *Bands*.” Prov. 30.

“ The *Stork* in the *Firmament* knoweth her
“ *appointed Time*.” Jer. 8.

“ The *Turtle*, the *Crane*, and the *Swallow*
“ observe their *Seasons*.”

“ Yet *GOD* hath not endued *them* with *Wisdom*,
“ neither hath he imparted to *them* *Understand-*
“ *ing*.” Job. 39.

The *Roman* Poet hath thus described the *Oeco-*
nomy of the *Bees*.

“ *Mane* ruunt portis, nusquam mora, rursus
“ eadem

B

“ *Vesper*

“ *Vesper ubi e pastu tandem decedere campis*
 “ *Admonuit, tum tecta petunt, tum corpora*
 “ *curant.*” VIRGIL.

Thus then to Man the Voice of *Nature* spake;
 “ Go, from the *Creatures* thy Instruction
 “ take.” POPE.

Is this apparent in the *Animal* Creation? Equally
 is it so in the *Vegetable*.

Mark 4. “ First the Blade, then the Ear, then the full
 “ Corn in the Ear :” The Steps of Nature are
progressive. “ To every thing there is a *Season*.”

Isaiah 1. If then every Part of the Creation—if the
Beasts of the Field, the *Fowls* of the Air, which
 have no Understanding, thus observe, by *Instinct*
 a regular *Order* and due *Course*, shall *Man*, who
 enjoys the Light of Reason, hurry on precipi-
 tately, without any Regard to *Regularity* and
Method, when the Testimony of his own Sen-
 ses, as well as the Pattern of the Brute Creation,
 condemns such a Practice, and tells him, in as
 plain Terms as possible, that *Confusion* and *Em-
 barassment* must of consequence be attendant on
 those who (in the Expression of the Apostle)
 2Thess. 3. “ walk disorderly?”

The Annals of History point out to you,
 in a strong Light, the natural Consequences
 which flow from a *Relaxation of Discipline*.
 That Anarchy and Confusion must inevitably en-
 sue, may be easily traced in the Rise and Fall of
 the

the ancient Republics—the Commonwealths of *Greece* and *Rome**. Every Instance concurs to prove that *Liberty*, if it once degenerates into *Licentiousness*, is equally detrimental to the *State*, and to every *Individual* of the Community; and that the Reins of Government can no longer be held with *Dignity*, than whilst a due Regard to *Propriety* and Decorum, *Regularity* and Subordination, is inviolably preserved and maintained.

Certain it is that *Jethro*, whose Judgment *Exod. 18.* was *matured* by Age and Experience, did not a little improve the Conduct of the Great Law-giver, by his wise Counsel and admirable Advice. With what *Ease* did *Moses* afterwards govern the People, when he acted according to *his* Directions?—"Appointing Rulers of Thousands, " Rulers of Hundreds, Rulers of Fifties, and " Rulers of Tens. The *hard* Causes they " brought to *Moses*, but every *small* Matter the " *Deputies* judged themselves; so that the Peo- " ple returned to their respective Homes, satis- " fied and in Peace." And it was by such an *Oeconomical* Administration, that he was enabled to " feed them with a faithful and true Heart, and " to rule them prudently with all his Power." *Psal. 78.*

Without a strict *Discipline*, a settled Execution of the *Laws*, and a regular Administration of *Justice*, the celebrated *Roman* Orator asserts †,

* See the Orations of *Demosthenes* and *Cicero*.

† Oratio pro *M. Marcello*.

there can be no solid Basis for that Fame which is true and permanent.

There is such a *Beauty* in Method and Regularity, that one would imagine every Person must be naturally *enamoured* with it!—Every Person would observe it on account of the *Facility* with which it enables them to conduct their Affairs; the *Ease* with which they can transact their Business, state their Accounts, and pass through the *various* Concerns of Life.

Gen. 32. What a striking *Example of Oeconomy* is set before you in the Person of the Patriarch *Jacob*, in
33. the Disposition of his *Wives*, his *Children*, and his *Cattle*! Very visible is his Observance of *Rule*, and his Attention to *Order*, in his arranging the respective Companies. Why, they were to keep a suitable *Distance* each from other—Why, the Stages of their Journey were to be *short*—and why, their Movements *slow*. It was for *prudential Reasons* there given. And as this *Disposition* was suggested by the Impulse of *Fear*, which frequently “betrays those Succours that “Reason offers,” it is a natural Inference that the same Regard to *Order* and *Method* characterized his *Conduct* under every Situation.

1 Tim. 3. Where there is *Regularity*, the Cottage of the meanest Peasant looks like a little Commonwealth within itself. For how agreeable is it to see (in the Expression of the Apostle) Persons “ruling “well their own House!”—To see a Family under so *exact* an *Oeconomy*, as that the Hours of Devotion

Devotion and Repast, Employment and Diversions, never break in upon, but duly and with Propriety follow each other !

Such a constant, *orderly*, and beautiful Succession must equally *delight* the Eye of the Beholder, as the *Practice* becomes familiar and pleasing to those who *walk* in the Paths of it.

With what Earnestness does the Apostle of the Gentiles in *one* Place enjoin a regular Conduct to the primitive Christians ! And in *another* Place you find him actually rejoicing when he beheld their *Order*, following his Pattern, as he followed CHRIST.

1 Cor. 14.

Coloss. 2.

It is recorded, to the Honour of the Friend of GOD and the Father of the Faithful, with what *admirable Order* he “ commanded his * Children and his Household.”

Gen. 18.

* To the Neglect of a regular Method of Education, and being trained up in a proper Instruction and Discipline, may, in a great Measure, be imputed the *Dissipation* and *Extravagance* of the *modern* Times. The salutary Principles of *Oeconomy* are, for the most part, either lightly regarded, or through a mistaken Notion become, by the Generality of the World, an Object of Contempt ; and if considered in this Light, it is not to be wondered, that this important Branch, so indispensably necessary to render all Persons happy in themselves, and useful Members of Society, makes no Part in the Education of their Offspring, while the Mind is pliant, and flexible, and susceptible of the best Impressions.

It was for *this Reason* that he was to be made a great and mighty Nation—A manifest Proof, that (as the Apostle argues) *the same Order with which he conducted his own private Affairs, was equally proper to be extended over a great and mighty Nation.* For the *Machine* of Government can no longer *vibrate*, than whilst its Movements are *regular*; and, under GOD, the Wealth, Strength and Prosperity of a Nation, chiefly depends on its *internal Police* and *civil Oeconomy*.

2 Kings
10.

Was it not the *Order, Regularity* and *Method*, with which every Thing was conducted by *Solomon*—The Disposition of his Fleets and Armies—The Discipline of his Officers—The Meat of his Table—The Sitting of his Servants—The Attendance of his Ministers, &c. that so particularly attracted the Admiration of the Queen of *Sheba*, and struck her with such Surprise, “that no more Spirit was left in her.”

Every one was placed in their respective Ranks; each had their particular Employment; and every Thing was (as under such an *Oeconomical* Direction it necessarily must be) “*beautiful in its Season.*”

But to perfect the Character of the *Oeconomist*, I must add to *ORDER*,

PRUDENCE.

P R U D E N C E.

THIS implies a *proper Enjoyment* of what you have—to make a *discreet Use* of it—to act agreeably to your *Character*—to *suit* yourself to your *Circumstances*—to whatever Situation of Life Providence hath placed you in. It implies a *Conduct* entirely *consistent* with itself upon all Occasions and in *every* Station; equally distant from *Profusion* on the one hand, and *Avarice* on the other—A strict Observance of the Apostle's Exhortation, "Be ye temperate in all Things;" industriously avoiding not only what is in itself *improper*, but also whatever has the least or most remote *Appearance* of *Impropriety*†; that the *Tongue* of the *Slanderer* may be struck dumb, and *Malevolence* lose its Sting. 1 Cor. 9.

Is your Lot fallen in a *fair* Ground? Hath God intrusted you with *great* Talents? Consider how great soever your Possessions may be, you are in Reality no more than a *Steward*: The Talents you have are committed to you in *Trust*, and for the Management of them you must be *responsible*. Psal. 16.

† *Propriety* of Conduct was considered by the ancient Philosophers as the most essential Part of Virtue, and *Prudence* ranked high amongst the Cardinal ones.

There is *One* who cannot be deceived ; who knows of the Wealth you are possessed of, and how much is too often thrown away in *vicious Pursuits* or *needless Expences*.

“ All Mankind (as a late excellent Writer † expresses it) are *equal* Sharers in the Wants and Necessities of Life ; and the Things which should supply these Wants are *unequally* divided.” Some abound, whilst others suffer Need,—“ It follows, that the *Abundance* of the one should minister to the *Necessities* of the other : For when you have discharged the *relative Duties*, you then become a Debtor to such Acts of *Beneficence*, as are required at the Hands of all those to whom God hath dispensed his Gifts liberally.”

Let no *Plenty* tempt you to be *profuse*. Was not your Affluence designed to promote God's Glory, as well as the Benefit of your Fellow-Creatures ? Most certainly—But *Profusion* and *Extravagance* are subservient to neither.

So enjoy your Abundance, as that what is *over* may not be *wasted* nor *misapplied* ; always remembering the Words of the LORD JESUS, how he said—“ Give *not* that which is holy to Dogs.”
 Matt. 7. —*Gather up* the Fragments that remain, “ that
 John 6. “ *nothing be lost*.”—Certainly the best *Rule* for you Direction in *this* and *all* Respects is, the

† Bishop *Sherlock's* Discourses, Vol. iii. p. 102. Lond. Edit.

Conduct of that Divine Person, who *dignified* our Nature by condescending to *assume* it.

Set *his* Pattern before your Eyes.

Let *his* Precepts be the Model of your Practice.

Let his *Example* influence your Lives.

*The Words**, you see very evidently, contain John 6. both a Command and a Prohibition. 12.

You are *enjoined*, after a *sober* Use of the daily Bread GOD hath given you, to gather up the Remains, the Overplus, and reserve them for a *future* Occasion. You are *prohibited*, as by the Bounty of Heaven you *received* it, from either making *Waste*, suffering it to be *made*, or seeing aught *misused* or *misapplied*; as undoubtedly it is very much so, when either on the one hand, it ministers to *Excess* of any kind, or on the other hand, *squandering* “the Childrens Bread by casting it to Dogs.” Matt. 15.

It is your Duty to *perform* what our LORD bids you—to be provident—careful—frugal†—to “gather up the Fragments which remain.” Equally does it become you to *abstain* from what he *prohibits* you,—Not thoughtlessly to *squander*,

* To make the *greater Impression* upon the Reader, this *very same* Portion of Scripture is appointed by our Church to be *twice* read in her second Service—the 4th Sunday in *Lent*, and the 25th Sunday after *Trinity*; (and I know of no other such Instance.) There is no other in the whole second Service.

† “Frugalitatem virtutem esse maximam judico.”

CICERO pro Rege DEIOTARO.

waste,

waste, or make *Consumption*—" Let nothing be
" lost."

But perhaps some one will ask—" *Cui bono*
" *inservit ?*" — To descend to such *minute*
Things—(' For the Words are *not*—" Such
" was the Provision, that every one might take
" a little"—' or that—" there was a Suffici-
" ency for *each* in so *great* a Number to partake
" a *small* Share." ' No. But it is *expressly*
' said, " They had *all eaten*—They had all
" *eaten*, even to *Satiety*"—" What then *could*
' there remain, but " the Crumbs ?"—' Of
' which, ordinarily speaking, *no Care* is wont to
' be taken'—" They fall under the Table.")

I answer, — What GOD hath thought fit to
propose to you, yea, and *expressly* to *enjoin*,—that
call not thou "*minute*." Would not the Prac-
tice thereof turn out to *your* Advantage, as the
Disciples undoubtedly found it did to *theirs*,
when at one Time, they gathered no less than
Mark 8. *twelve* Baskets, at another *seven* ? For as they
well reasoned among themselves, though upon
another Occasion—" It becometh us not to *lose*
" any thing ! — To what Purpose should there be
Matt. 26. "*Waste* made ?"

Does not this *Gathering up* the Fragments,
prevent their being *lost* ? For *that* is the Duty
incumbent upon you—*this* is your *next* Care.
They may be useful to *yourselves* ; for your *pre-*
sent Affluence is no Security against *future* Exi-
gencies.

gencies. They may be serviceable to *others*;
 “ for the *Poor* you have always with you, and
 “ when you will, you may do them *Good*.” Mark 14.

Suffer here a *small* Digression in Favour of a
Duty which my Subject naturally leads me to,
 and which is in itself the very Life and Spirit of
Christianity.

Every Principle of *Humanity*—every Motive
 of *Religion*—every Maxim of *Policy*—every Argu-
 ment of the *Understanding*—and every Sentiment
 of the *Heart*, pleads for the Discharge of this
great Duty.

“ Be glad to distribute,” is what the Voice of 1 Tim. 6.
Reason and *Revelation* inculcates, the invisible
 Tie of *Nature* prompts you to, *Conscience* ap-
 proves, and your *Condition* of Life empowers you
 to perform.

If where there is *Bread* enough, and to spare,
 those who stand *without* want it, Sin lies at your
 Door. Gen. 4.

Consider well; Oeconomy is the *Parent* of Be-
 neficence. By your *gathering up* the Fragments
 which remain, you will be the better enabled to
 “ scatter them abroad upon the Waters.” This Ecclef. 11.
 is the right *Principle* of Frugality.

* Certainly your *Light* never *shines* before Men
 with more resplendent Lustre, nor can yield
 greater Satisfaction to your *own Breast*, than
 whilst you are communicating that Happiness to
 others which you yourself enjoy; and like the
 Sun

Sun with its benign Influence, calling forth the Powers of Nature. The greatest Man in all the *East* did not in any one Thing display a more *amiable Pattern* for your Imitation than in this—that “he never eat his Morfel himself alone, “ so that the Fatherless did not eat thereof with “ him.”

Job 31.

Were something *spared* from the Elegancies, I may say with greater Propriety, from the Superfluities of Life; if some unnecessary Expenses were *retrenched*, and other pompous Exuberances *rescinded*, (which cannot *profit*, nor yield any permanent Bliss; for they are *vain*;) what ample Room would there be left for *such* Actions, as give a secret Delight in the *Performance*, and the Pleasure of which improves in *Reflection*.

1 Sam.
12.

To a *thoughtful* Person, (if he attends to what his own Mind *dictates* to him) *this* Reflection will always be uppermost. Whilst I—*συνπαίνομεν λαμπρὰς*—not only *enjoy* all the Comforts, but even *wanton* amidst all the Superfluities of Life, ought I not to send *Portions* to them, for whom *nothing* is prepar'd?

Luke 16.

Neh. 8.

Consider: It is by *such an* Use of the good Things you are possessed of, that you will be *intituled* to that desirable Blessing the Wise Man alludes to—An *Exemption from Sorrow*. (Very often indeed the Case is much otherwise; the

Jonah 4.

Worm lies at the Root of the *Gourd*, and Blessing

is

is far from them;) "GOD maketh rich, and Psal. 109.
 "adds *no Sorrow* with it." Prov. 10.

Are your Circumstances "minished and brought
 "low?" *Contract* your Desires. Psal. 107.

Perhaps GOD hath *not* set your Feet in a large Room, yet, if you are possessed of *two Mites*, that, with prudent Management, *will* be sufficient. That it is a *small* Sum, we will admit; but that it *has* been deem'd sufficient is very evident, for it *sustain'd a Widow*,—it was,—her *whole* Living,—and, till she thought fit to *part* with it, gave her Bread to eat, and Raiment to put on. Under *strait* Circumstances, undoubtedly there *will* be Difficulties, there *will* be Grievances, there *will* be Temptations!—When *Job* expostulates with his Friends, he has *Truth* enough to support his Question;—"Does the "wild Ass bray when he *has* Meat? Or low-
 "eth the Ox over his *Fodder*?" But though there are no *coercive Means* you can use to gain an extraordinary Supply; though you cannot *command* that the Barrel of Meal waste not, and that the Cruse of Oil should not fail; yet by a *well-timed Self-denial* you can cut off many *need-
 less, superfluous Expences*—you may (*and ought indeed*) so far to with-hold yourself from making such Provision for the Flesh, as to fulfil the Lusts thereof—you can, by these Means, *improve* what you have to the best *Advantage*.

In

In this vast and beautiful System of the Universe, where not a single Atom *stands still*, where every Part of the Creation is employed, can it be supposed with any Colour of Reason, that *Man*, endued with superior Faculties, is formed only to sit down to *eat*, and *drink*, and rise up to

Exod. 32. *play?*

Man was *not* made to be *idle*, but was intended from his original State of Innocence for an *active* Life; and therefore, as soon as he was formed, he was sent into the Garden of *Eden*, to *till*, to *dress* and to *keep* it.

Gen. 2.

What various Incentives are there to *Industry*?

In the natural Course of Things it is so ordered, that *nothing* valuable can be procured *without* it; for the *Earth* bringeth not forth *Fruit* without a *repeated Tillage*, and a *continued Cultivation*.

Here we may with Pleasure observe those admirable *Institutions*, which the Wisdom of the Legislature hath erected for the Encouragement of *Industry*, the Cultivation of *Arts* and *Sciences*, the Advancement of *Commerce*, and the Improvement of useful *Manufactures*; with a View to *animate* the World to a laudable Exertion of their *Faculties*, to *raise* a noble and generous Spirit of *Emulation*, ever conducive to the *Welfare* and *Prosperity* of a *commercial People*.

It is observable in the Gospel, that when a certain Man took a *Journey* into a far Country,
he

he did not leave his *Affairs at Home unsettled, unprovided for, or disconcerted.* “He gave to each Man his *Work*: To one five Talents—to another two—to every one according to his several Abilities, with Orders to each to *occupy the same till his Return*:” And then he rewarded the Industry of those who had *faithfully discharged the Trust* reposed in them. Mark 13.

A *supine Negligence* is in itself *criminal*. Accordingly you find *that Servant*, who let his Talent lie dead and unimproved, is not only severely rebuked for being slothful and unprofitable, but for being *wicked*. Luke 19.

It does not appear, that he wasted it by *Extravagance*. But his Fault was, he did *not* improve it; he *wrapped* it up in a Napkin—he *hid* it in the Earth—when it certainly became his Duty to have *put it out* to the Exchangers. Matt. 25.

Endeavour by the honest Arts of Industry and Labour, Diligence and Frugality, (“*rising up early, late taking Rest, and eating the Bread of Carefulness*”) to improve what you are possessed of, to the best Advantage, and to gain, if possible, an additional Talent to the one you have, never “*enlarging your Desires*” beyond the Limits of your Fortune. Prudence requires that you should conform yourself to your Station, check all aspiring Views; and in your Seasons of Relaxation, as well as in every other Point of your Conduct, consult *your own Circumstances*, not the *Pattern* of your *Superiors*, and

and proportion your *current Expences* to your *annual Revenue*.

It is a Reflection, which, though with Reluctance, Truth obliges me to make—A *Prevalence* of *Luxury*, the *Love* of false *Pleasure*,
 1 John 2. and the *Pride* of *Life*, tempts (I had almost said) all Persons to *live above* the Rank which they hold in the Society, impelled in a great Measure by that *prevailing Vice* *, which so easily besets the Unguarded, is destructive of all *Morals*, *Industry* and *Order*, and a Stimulus to every other *vicious Pursuit*.

Ecclef. 7. In *this* Particular, surely “the former Times
 “were better than these:” If we view the general Propensity to *Gaiety*, *Dissipation* and *Extravagance*, which at present reigns in all Conditions of *Life*. *Luxury* hath fatally spread its *Influence* among those *middling* Parts of the Community, which heretofore were untainted.

Dazzled with the *false Glitter* of *Pomp* and *Grandeur*—eager to *outvie* each other—their Senses are *captivated* with the dissolute *Maxims* of *Luxury* and *Pleasure*; and no Wonder, when they see through the *Medium* of *Ambition* and *Envy*, that they reflect not on the *Impropriety* of *Conduct*, the *Inequality* of *Station*, or the *Disproportion* of *Revenue*.

• Gaming.

Certain

Certain it is, the Manners of the People are *influenced* by the *Conduct* of those who move in a higher Sphere. The Pattern *they* set, whether virtuous or vicious, is a Model implicitly imitated by *those* that are in an inferior Station.

What are the *Opinions* and *Practices* of the John 7. Rulers?—Was the Question of the *ancient* Pharisees; and the *modern* Times are actuated by the *same* Motives. Custom and Education *lead* the Way, and a natural Disposition *prompts* to it.

Of this you have a striking Proof in the *Lacedæmonian* Republic; which, as a learned Hea-then † informs us, soon partook of the common Fate of Empires, when *its* Leaders fell into a state of Degeneracy.

Since “these Things are so,” Luxury and Pro- Acts 7. fusion, Waste, Intemperance, and its concomitant Train, must therefore *first* be banished from the Tables of the *Great*, and *then* we may hope to see Frugality and Sobriety, Industry and Diligence, reign among the *inferior* Orders of Men, and the happy Fruits of *such* Conduct diffused through every Member of Society.

The Christian should consider himself (like the ancient Philosopher) as a Citizen of the World, and every Species of Luxury and Profusion, as *injurious* to that Community, of which he is a *Member*.

† Xenophon.

Take a View of ancient History. There you will find that the *Glory* of a Nation was never founded on the *Luxury* of the People; but, on the contrary, that it always consisted in *Discipline*, *Temperance*, and the salutary Maxims of *Virtue* and *Moderation*. *Luxury* always relaxes the Sinews of Government. The Reason is obvious. A Depravity of Taste, and Degeneracy of Morals, are the natural Effects of *Luxury* and *Dissipation*; and when the internal Principles of Action are vitiated, the Arts, Sciences, and every rational Pursuit, must of consequence decline.

Seldom, very seldom, do we find the Apostle *so* vehement in his Exhortations, *so* earnest in his Remonstrances, and under such Commotions, as when he is inveighing against *that very Sin*, from which I am *now* dissuading you—"How often," (says he to the *Philippians*) have I told you "before, and now tell you, even weeping, that if "you thus continue to give up yourselves to your "own Hearts *Lusts*, reject and disclaim all Acts "of *Self-denial*, as if not Christian Duties, and "break through every Rule of *Temperance*, *Sobriety* and *Moderation*, the *End* thereof will Phil. 3. "terminate in your *Destruction*."

A little is enough for all the *Necessities*, for all the innocent *Delights* of Nature; and it may be very justly asserted, that *without* Oeconomy, how large soever an Estate is, there will still be a *Deficiency*; for, as *Horace* observes,

"*Multa*

" *Multa petentibus, defunt multa.*"

But *with* Oeconomy, it will always be found that the *least* Estate is not too *small*—

" *Vivitur parvo bene.*"

He, who knows his Duty, will not request God for *more*, than what he is *taught* to pray for, *viz.* that Heaven would bestow upon him

" *This Day* his daily Bread."

Matt. 6.

He, whose God is his Belly, (as the Apostle Phil. 3. expresses it) will not be *so* restrained, will not be satisfied with asking for *To-day*, ("neither with "two Days, nor five Days, neither with ten "Days nor twenty Days.") No. His Language is—"Give me such *Plenty*, as I may be "independent.—Give me such an *ample Share* of "the good Things of this Life, as that my Soul "may take her *Ease*." Such is the *Presumption*, (says the Evangelist) of the voluptuous Epicure.—
On the other Hand,

Num. 11. 19.

Luke 12.

Admire the *Moderation* of *Agur*—"Conve- Prov. 30.
"nient Food." That is, so much as will satisfy the *Cravings* of Nature: He solicited for nothing *farther*; nothing *more* than what was *essentially* necessary. "Necessary (says the Sacred Writer) for *Strength*, but not to *Surfeit*—
"ing." So say the Profane Writers—

Ecclef. 10.

“Modò importuna pauperies *abest*.”

“Modò Deus obtulit parçâ (quod *satis* est) manu” — *Bene* est.—

Hear the Appointment of the *Shunamite* with respect to the Man of GOD: “Let us make a
2 Kings “little Chamber, and set for him there a *Bed*,
4 “and a *Table*, a *Stool*, and a *Candlestick*.”

Real Wants are few,—*imaginary* ones innumerable.—A *real* Want is *cheaply* satisfied,—but an *useless* Vanity is very *costly*.

Fancy, Taste, and Caprice, have invented an infinite Number of Superfluities, unknown to our Ancestors, and introduced many expensive *Follies*, under the Notion of modern *Refinements*.

To *contract the Desires* is the grand Principle of human *Happiness*—“Seekest thou *great* Things
Jer. 45. “for thyself?” The Voice of enlightened *Reason*, as well as *Scripture*, replies—“Seek them
“not.” For when once a *Loose* is given to the *Desire* of Superfluities, you know *no* End—your *Wishes* are vague and *unlimited*—you can set *no* Bounds: The Gratification of *one* inordinate Pursuit paves the Way for *another*; and no sooner is the *present* vain Wish indulged, than a *future* imaginary *Necessity* arises, equally importunate.

Retrench your Expences, inviolably adhering to that admirable Axiom of the *Roman Poet*—

—————“*Infra*
“*Fortunam* debet quisque; manere suam.”

OVID.

You

Your Portion is not *large* indeed,
But then how *little* do you need ?
For Nature's Calls are few.
In this the Art of Living lies,
To want *no more* than may suffice ;
And make that *little* do.

Dr. COTTON.

What *Riches* give, only let's enquire,
Meat, Fire, Clothes ;—What more ?—Meat,
Clothes and Fire. POPE.

Mark well, when the Poet asks the Question—
What more ? The *Beauty* of his Answer is in re-
peating the same Words—He hath *made* the En-
quiry—they can *give* no more.

The utmost Riches *can* do, upon the largest
Concessions made to them, is to provide “ Food
“ and Raiment ;” and indeed, without a discreet
Management, “ the greatest Possessions will fly
“ away, as an Eagle towards Heaven.” Prov. 23.

It is “ Wisdom that dwells with Prudence.”—
It is “ a good Understanding” that will make a Psal. 111.
small Portion prove a *Competency*. 10.

It is always with Pleasure observed, that a cer-
tain *Neatness* and *Cheerfulness* attends the Table
of him who lives *within Compass*, where every
Thing is conducted with that beautiful System of
Oeconomy, which unites *Elegance* with *Simplicity*,
and *Taste* with *Propriety*.

Daily Experience confirms *this* Truth, that he who *wastes* his Substance, when possessed of a *moderate* Fortune, his Finances would be equally *exhausted*, if he had a more *ample* Revenue. The *Cause* is self-evident. There is a certain *Air of Waste, Negligence and Extravagance*, runs through *every Thing*; that it is no Wonder if *herein* the Observation of *Job* is perfectly applicable—"In the Fulness of his Sufficiency he
 Job 20. "shall be in Straits."

The prudent Person *thrives* in his temporal Affairs. It is for *this* Reason—Because he often *balances* his Accounts; *examines* his Gains and his Losses; sees what *Proportion* they bear to each other; considers where his *Conduct* may have been *faulty* in any Respect, and how for the future to *rectify* it.

On the other hand, he who hath involved himself in *Debt* by a long Course of *Extravagance* and *Prodigality*, finds himself utterly undone to state his Accounts. The *Occasion* of it is clear—They become every Day more perplexed and intricate, being a mere *Stranger at Home*, and ignorant of his *domestic* Concerns.
 Heb. 2.

The prudent Person preserves his Affairs *unembarrassed*, and *justly* can call what he hath *his own*. Why? Because he *strictly* adheres to the Apostolical Injunction—"Owe no Man any
 Rom. 13. "Thing." Living thus always within his Income, his Retrospection is without *Regret*, equally as his Prospect is without *Terror*; has no Incentives

centives to (because indeed he has no *Occasion* for) *mean* Artifices or *evasive* Subterfuges; is able at any Time to retire from the World; step into his Closet, and reflect with Pleasure on his past Conduct.

But to change the Scene.—What are the Fruits of *Luxury*, *Sensuality* and *Intemperance*? Disease preying upon your Vitals; at the same Time, that your *Morals* are vitiated, your whole Frame is *enervated*, “the whole *Head* is sick, the whole “*Heart* is faint.”

Isaiah 1.

What are the Fruits of Waste, Profusion and Extravagance? Want and Poverty and a Train Prov. 23. of Consequences, no less fatal to your Fortune, than the other to your Health.

Here it may not perhaps be *foreign* to the Design, to take a View of the Situation of that Person who hath *wasted* his Substance with *riotous Living*. Can we count such an one happy? No. Luke 15. In the Nature of Things it is *incompatible*. His Mind cannot be at *Ease*—without, are *Aspersions* and *Reproaches*—within, *Fear* and *Confusion*! View him in all his Connexions, and you will find him *equally* miserable, looking in vain for that *Respect* which he hath forfeited by his *Conduct*.

There may perhaps be carried on a specious *Show* of Pomp; but it is a Kind of magnificent Indigence, a splendid Poverty. There wants that *Propriety*, *Consistency* and *Symmetry* of

Parts

Parts which constitutes and distinguishes *real Grandeur*.

Can *Reason* or *Reflection* yield him any Succour upon this Occasion? No. These, which are the greatest Blessings to him who *can* use them, become to this Person a Burden insupportable.

Acts 24. 25. The Reason is obvious. His Conduct will not bear a strict Scrutiny; and the *deeper* he enters into it, the more formidable is the Scene that opens! So formidable, that we may well take up the Words of the Prophet, and say, "Behold and see, "if there be *any* Sorrow like unto *this* Sorrow!"

Lam. 1. 12. He therefore makes haste to escape from the *serious Hour*, yet notwithstanding all his Efforts, it *will* come.

He may indeed flatter himself with a delusive Appearance of great Possessions: But "when he comes to himself," he finds he is only *titular*—not *actual* Possessor of them. There are *many* lay Claim, and perhaps he hath *not* sufficient to answer their Demands.

Luke 15.

What is the Consequence? Liberty itself, the most *valuable* Privilege, he is not secure of. Has he a Family? This Circumstance embitters his Calamity, and makes it, if possible, more poignant; for they must be involved in the *Punishment*, though probably they were not accessory to the *Guilt*. Is he deprived of Liberty? What must the poor Widow and Orphans do? For a *Widow* she certainly is, and *Orphans* they are, to all the

Intent's

Intents and Purposes of Sorrow, whilst he "is fast bound in Misery and Iron."

Psal. 107.

This is not an *imaginary Picture, ideal*, formed only in the *Fancy*, but a *real Representation* of the *Effects* of Extravagance.—"And when I looked, behold a Hand was sent unto him; and lo! a Roll of a Book was therein; and it was written *within* and *without*—Lamentations, and Mourning, and Woe!" Too many melancholy Instances there are to give sufficient Evidence, that these are the "Words of Truth and Soberness."

Ezek. 2.
9, 10.

Acts 26.
25.

And now upon a View of the Whole, (having weighed Actions and their Consequences in the just Balance) which of the two can be properly said to *enjoy* Life, the prudent *temperate* Person who lives *within* his Income? or the Voluptuary and the Sensualist, who run *beyond* it? For *each* counts the Life of the *other* Madness.

Wisdom

The Voice of *Reason* will decide; and *Experience* has set to its Seal, that this *Testimony* is true.

5.

You see every Day the pernicious Effects of *Profuseness*, and whereto it will ultimately tend*.

He

* It is an Observation worthy of his present Grace of York, and Experience proves it to be founded on Truth, That "*Frugality* is the strongest Safeguard to *Fidelity*." *Extravagance*, on the other Hand, is often observed to be antecedent to *Breach of Trust*.

Had not the Steward in the Gospel *wasted* the Substance of his Lord, it is very probable, having no Inducement

See his
Sermon
at Christ-
Church,
London,
April 26,
1753.

He therefore that gives into it, must not be destitute of Thought? void of all Reflection? Certainly—the Expression of the Evangelist *con-*
 Luke 15. *firms* it—“ When he *came to himself.*”—implying that his *former* Conduct was heady, rash and precipitate, when all the Powers of Reason lay dormant.

It is observable, that when a Widow of one of the Sons of the Prophets implored Redress from the Man of God, on account of the Demands of a relentless Creditor, she assigned this Reason—
 2 Kings 4. “ Thy Servant *feared the LORD* ;”—implying, that had her Distress been the Consequence of *Extravagance*, she would not have been a fit Object of Compassion; for,

All Wastefulness is Sin.

You have not in the whole Scriptures a more glaring Instance of this, than in the Gospel of

placement to the contrary, he would have maintained his Integrity.

Several Instances concur to point out *this Truth*, which is in itself obvious. *Want* is the certain Consequence of *Waste*; and the *Shame* which arises from a Sense of Poverty, is an *Impulse* to supply by low Schemes the Deficiencies occasioned by *Extravagance*, and to cover their *Indigence* at the Expence of their *Probity*. They fancy they preserve an Influence, which, when exerted, they find to be a gross Mistake; and under this Dilemma, in order, as they vainly imagine, to retrieve their former Importance, are tempted to a Breach of *Trust*—to violate the Rules of *Justice*, and to pursue mean *Artifices*. I need but produce one Instance, (and that a striking one) the celebrated Lord Verulam.

St. *Luke*, where it is emphatically called—"A
" *Sin against Heaven.*"

Luke 15.

If one Man sin against *another*, as *Eli* observes, "the Judge shall judge him."—the Cognizance then comes before the civil *Magistrate*—*1 Sam.* 2.
"the Law is open—they may implead one another."
Acts 19.

But this is an *aggravated* Guilt—Many concurring Circumstances tend to *heighten* it into what the Psalmist calls a "*great Offence.*" *Himself* confesses it—"I have sinned *against Heaven.*"
"I have sinned *against my Father.*"

Psal. 19.

109.

If ever "Satan stood at the right Hand" of an unguarded Youth, to point out to him "the broad Way that leadeth to Destruction," it certainly was *here*.

Instead of attending to this *salutary* Maxim—"Let *nothing* be lost"—What *Havock* was made! What *Destruction* was wrought! He squandered *without Measure*, being indulged *without Controul*. In one comprehensive Phrase—*Every thing* was lost. *Every* Blessing from Above perverted, misused, misapplied—His *Honour* laid in the Dust—his *Health* sacrificed—his *Patrimony* devoured—his *Time* vilely thrown away—his *Duty* to God, his Neighbour, and himself, violated.

John 6.

Behold *here* the Wretch completed.

Behind him he saw nothing but *Guilt* and
Shame :

Shame : Before him nothing but Misery and Despair.

Observe *now* the Connexion. Observe, Judg-
2 Pet. 2 ment *lingers* not.

1 Kings " *Hast thou found me, O mine Enemy ?—I*
21. " *have found thee.*

Psal. 39. When GOD with Rebukes doth chasten Man
for Sin, very often he doth it *instantaneously*.

Ecclef. 8. " Sentence against an evil Work is executed
" *speedily,*" and " the *right-aiming* Thunder-
Wisdom " *bolt*" *immediately* levelled at the Head of the
5. Offender.

Psal. 64. Hear what the Royal Psalmist says : " GOD
" *suddenly* shoots at them with a *swift* Arrow.
" The LORD knoweth the Thoughts of Man,
" that they are *vain.*" But sure never *more* vain,
Psal. 56. than when they think they shall " *escape* for their
" *Wickedness.*"

Luke 15. For no sooner do you read of his *riotous Living*,
than you read of as quick a Succession by *relentless*
Poverty. " It came upon him like one that tra-
Prov. 24. " *vaiileth.* It seized him like an *armed* Man."

Does *Experience* give Testimony to this
18. Truth ? So also does *Scripture.*

The *great Waster* will certainly find it " Bit-
2 Sam. 2. " *terness* in the latter End."

It will (" *Erit, erit illud profectò tempus, &*
" *illucescet tandem aliquando ille dies quùm*.*")

It *certainly will*, sooner or later, (in that emphatical Expression of the Royal Psalmist) “ come into his Bowels like Water, and like Oil into his Bones.”

Psal. 109.

When the prodigal Son had spent *all*, then it was that GOD called for a *Dearth* upon the Land, and destroyed all the Provision of Bread.

105.

It is a just Remark of a Writer, who well knew the World, That “ Numbers are brought into bad Circumstances rather from *small Neglects* than from any *great Errors* in *material Affairs*.” People are too apt to think lightly of Shillings and Pence, forgetting that they are the constituent Parts of a Pound, till a Deficiency in a greater Article shews them their Mistake—convinces them by *dear-bought* Experience of a Truth, which they might have learnt from a little Attention, viz. that *Great Sums are made up of small*; and that therefore “ he that contemneth *small Things* must of consequence *fall by little and little*.”

Eccius. 19.

And now, before I close this ESSAY, I would remark to you *one* Observation, which may not perhaps, in the Course of your Reading, have engaged your *Attention*, viz.

This laudable Example of “ *Gathering up the* Matt. 14.
“ *Fragments which remain*, that nothing be Mark 15.
“ *lost*,” *proposed* by CHRIST, and *practised* by Mark 6.
his Disciples, is set before you by *every* Evangelist. Luke 8.
“ Let him that readeth, understand.” John 6.

Was Matt. 24.

Was it of *little* or of *small* Importance, would it have found so *many* Pages in the sacred Text ? Would it have been so *very* particularly repeated, inculcated, enforced ?

This certainly is a very *striking*, (I had almost said an unparalleled) Circumstance, and indicates it to be highly worthy of *Him* who spoke it—
 Matt. 7-29. and of “*sinking deep into your Ears.*”
 Luke 9.

Each of the Evangelists have *some* Criterion whereby to distinguish them.

One represents CHRIST exerting his Divine
 Acts 10. Power in *doing Good*.

Another views him enlightening the People by his *Doctrine*, by which their *Prepossessions* were
 Luke 4. *shaken*, and their *Prejudices* loosened.

One views him in his *public* Character, whilst *another* accompanies him through the *Garden*, his Hours of *Retirement*, and his *private* Confessions.
 John 18.

It is easy to discern, That

Matthew applies himself to the *Miracles*, and to the Completion of the *Prophecies*.

Mark, (the *shortest* of all the Gospels) is the most *circumstantial* in relating the *Sufferings* of CHRIST.

Psal. 78. *Luke* opens his Mouth in *Parables*.

Luke 4. *John*, (ever attendant upon his Master) lets *none* of those *gracious Words*, which proceeded out of his Mouth, fall to the Ground ; but as “*no Man*

John 7. “*ever spake like this Man,*” records them all.

Each

Each of the Evangelists hath something peculiar to himself.—

Yet, as I intimated to you above, very observable it is, and much to be noticed, that in giving *this* USEFUL ADMONITION they ALL concur, and with *one Voice* propose the Pattern for your Imitation: From which Circumstance, it is natural to make *this* Inference, that so important a Lesson for your Conduct, (in the Observance of which the *Happiness* of human Life so very much depends) could not be too much inculcated.

And that it was for us Men, and our Instruction, that *HE* who (alone) could turn Stones into Bread, as well as Water into Wine, gave this Command—

(“ O! that it were graven with an Iron Pen
“ and Lead in the Rock for ever”)

Job 19.

“ Gather up the Fragments that remain, that
“ nothing be lost.”

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Ackworth, near Ferrybridge, Yorkshire,

December 16, 1762.

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F I N I S.



Reviewers Testimonials.

CRITICAL REVIEW, Vol. 13. P. 80. Jan. 1762.

“ IN this Age of Dissipation and Extravagance, we could
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MONTHLY REVIEW, Vol. 26. P. 387. May, 1762.

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“ more peculiarly stand in Need of cautionary Advice in regard
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